

Michigan GAAMP Update

The 2021 Draft GAAMPs are available online for review and comments

The Michigan Department of Agriculture has released the new draft GAAMPs online and are currently taking public comments for a short time. The Manure Management/Utilization, Site Selection and Nutrient Utilization GAAMPs are the one most frequently used/followed by our clients. The Site Selection GAAMP has also recently changed it's application format and maps that they want used for future submissions. Be sure to check out their website.

Seeking Public Input on Agricultural Management Practices

Deadline to provide comment is October 7, 2020

The proposed drafts of the 2021 Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs) is available for public review and comment until 5:00 p.m. on **Wednesday, October 7, 2020**, Comments are accepted by:

- **Email** to MDARD-RTF@Michigan.gov
- **Mail** to MDARD's Environmental Stewardship Division, P.O. Box 30017, Lansing, MI 48909 and postmarked no later than October 7, 2020.
- **Call** into the public input meeting on October 1, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#) or [call 248-509-0316](tel:248-509-0316) and enter Conference ID: 599 584 55#

For complete information go to their website: https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1599_1605---,00.html

MI CAFO Update

MI CAFO General Permit Status

All CAFO farms in Michigan are required to have coverage with EGLE with either an Individual permit or under the General permit. The General permit is revised every 5 years. The 2015 General Permit was replaced with the 2020 General permit on April 1st of this year. However, a coalition of seven Michigan agricultural organizations and more than 120 farmers said, "Enough is enough!" and filed an appeal to the Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules on May 26th, challenging the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy's revised permit for large livestock farms that took effect on April 1. The coalition, consisting of Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Milk Producers Association, Michigan Pork Producers Association, Michigan Allied Poultry Industries, Dairy Farmers of America, Select Milk Producers, Foremost Farms and more than 120 individual permit holders (farmers), is requesting an injunction to prevent farmers from having to comply with the revised conditions.

The timeline for the appeal is expected to take well into 2021. MFB Attorney and Assistant General Counsel Allison Eicher said the filing requests an evaluation of the legality and conditions imposed by the NPDES permit and its adverse impact on Michigan farmers and food production. "The appeal process is not a lawsuit but resembles a trial that takes place within the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy," Eicher said. "It may also be referred to as a 'contested case challenge' or 'administrative challenge.'" According to Eicher, the appeals process will involve expert testimony from interested stakeholders, both for and against the new NPDES regulations. Following the hearing, an administrative law judge will make a final decision on the agricultural coalition request to invalidate the challenged provisions and strike them from the new NPDES permit requirements. The coalition also has filed a Civil lawsuit along with the contested case.

So, what does all of this mean for you...? All of our General Permit CAFO clients have already reapplied for coverage under the 2020 permit. Your permits are all still valid with your coverage being extended under the 2015 General permit while the contested case is being processed. Those farms with individual permits still need to reapply as required (once every 5 years) and follow all of the conditions and guidelines of your existing approvals. For now EGLE staff will be doing compliance under the 2015 permit. This means that all rules, records, site inspections and reports will still be due as normal under the previous permit coverage. As stated above, the timeline is unknown for the contested case to be processed, but we will keep you informed.

Weather Website Update

The weather website information posted on the EGLE CAFO website is not correct. The past two website links to get the required Q24 and P24 weather information have both been disabled and are no longer working. Please use the proper link to get your required weather data that can be accessed here:

https://www.weather.gov/mdl/mos_getbull?ele=MEX&sta=KOEB,KJYM&cyc=00&newwin=yes

Note* your pop-up blocker must be turned off in order for this website link to work. If you have continued problems, give Mandy a call at the office and she will help you figure it out.

EGLE Permitting Staff

Alexis Gronda accepted a position with EGLE at a different office effective July 31, 2020. She is no longer at the Kalamazoo office working on any of our farms. Bruce Washburn is handling the majority of her workload for now until they hire a replacement for her. He can be contacted at (269) 330-6079.

OISC Update

They have discontinued the Category 14 paper test. The only way you can take the exam is to go online through <http://indiana.metrosignup.com> and take the computer test at a remote testing center. If you are IDEM permitted, you must have the Cat. 14 certification to apply manure, on your field or anyone else's field. If you still need to get the Cat. 14, call our office and we will give you all the information about how and where to get it.

This year there have been very few meetings to get PARP or CCH points. You are still required to have your three (3) meetings completed if this is your expiration year. Be sure to check your points and expiration year. **Please call our office to let us know if you still need one or two points this year. We can help you find a way to get those points.** OISC is hoping to arrange online ZOOM meetings hosted by the various county extension agents to help fulfil your point requirements.

We (Melissa and the County Extension Agent in Noble County) are planning to have a Manure Meeting in Albion on December 3rd that will have both CCH (Commercial) and PARP (Private Ap) points available. This meeting is still in the planning stages. It would be very helpful if you would call our office and let Melissa know what time of day is most convenient for you. We want to reach as many people as possible. More info to come...

OISC Billing Coming Soon!

In October the OISC mails out the bills to keep your Category 14 current. **BE SURE TO PAY THEM!**

Fire Caution on Wet Hay

Hay baled and stored at a moisture level higher than the recommended level could heat up and start a barn fire. If hay is baled without a preservative with a moisture content higher than 20%, you are at risk. It doesn't necessarily occur quickly; it may take a month. Stored hay temperature should be monitored, and the local fire department should be notified if it builds to dangerous levels.

If hay is not given time to dry and is stored prematurely, heat-tolerant microorganisms develop, raising the temperature. When the temperature is 150 degrees Fahrenheit, it is in a dangerous temperature zone. Steps should be taken to decrease the temperature, such as taking the stacked hay apart to allow more air movement to cool heated bales. **Once 200 degrees Fahrenheit is reached, a fire is very likely.**

To dry hay faster, lay the cut forage in a wide swath with a mower-conditioner. Hay cut in a wide swath is exposed to more sunlight and dries faster. The conditioner crimps the stems of newly cut hay and allows moisture to escape at a faster rate.

Practice Fire Safety at Harvest

Each year during harvest volunteer fire departments are called to respond to combine or field fires. These guidelines can help ensure a safer harvest season without fire emergencies.

Combine Maintenance

Preventative maintenance is key to preventing fires that occur on farm equipment.

- Keep all bearings and gears well lubricated to prevent heat buildup and keep lubricants at proper levels.
- Repair any leaks in the fuel system and any damaged electrical wiring.
- Repair or replace damaged or worn out exhaust systems. In addition to a good exhaust system, install a spark arrester to catch burning particles. They are easy to install and require little maintenance.

Before and during harvest operations check for a buildup of combustible crop residue around the engine and exhaust system; concealed drive belts and pulleys that can overheat due to friction when there is an accumulation of crop residue around them; and worn or frayed electrical wiring that can cause sparks and ignite grain dust, crop residues, or fuel vapors.

Refueling Safety

Too often during harvest, safe fueling practices are ignored to save time. The few seconds saved are insignificant when compared to the loss of expensive farm equipment or weeks or even months spent in a hospital burn ward. Follow safety practices:

- Never refuel equipment with the engine running.
- Allow hot engines to cool 15 minutes before refueling.
- Extinguish all smoking materials before refueling.
- If fuel spills on an engine, wipe away any excess and allow the fumes to dissipate before starting the engine.

Plan to Avoid Emergencies

Being prepared to respond to a fire if one should occur can save critical minutes.

- Start harvesting a field on the downwind side. If a fire does occur, the flames will be pushed toward the harvested portion of the field.
- Always carry a cell phone or alternative for communicating with others in case of an emergency.
- Know the location of the field in relationship to letters or numbers on county roads. This seems obvious, but in the excitement of the moment, it's easy to not be able to recall this information. More than once volunteer firefighters have been paged for a field fire "northeast of town" and then had to look for the smoke.
- Always carry two fire extinguishers on the combine, one in the cab and one that you can access from the ground. Also, carry a fire extinguisher in your grain hauling equipment.
- If a field or equipment fire does occur, call 911 before trying to extinguish it yourself.
- Have a tractor hooked to a disk near the field you are harvesting, but located where it wouldn't be affected if a field fire should occur.
- If using a fire extinguisher, stay between the fire and your path to safety. Remember to PASS:
 - Pull the safety pin on the extinguisher.
 - Aim it at the base of the fire.
 - Squeeze the handle.
 - Sweep the extinguisher back and forth while releasing the contents.



Don't let this be your story

Following these safety tips may seem like common sense, but with the long hours and rush to get harvest done, sometimes these are forgotten.